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## Viewing cable 04BOGOTA11339, THE UN'S FUTURE IN COLOMBIA \

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
04BOGOTA11339	2004-11-02 18:31	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bogota

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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

22350 2004-11-02 18:31:00 04BOGOTA11339 Embassy Bogota CONFIDENTIAL 04BOGOTA10728|04BOGOTA11205|04BOGOTA11207 This record is a partial extract

\ C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BOGOTA 011339 \

\ SIPDIS \

\ E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2014 \

\ TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [FHUM](#) [FINR](#) [PREL](#) [CO](#)

\ SUBJECT: THE UN'S FUTURE IN COLOMBIA \

\ REF: A) BOGOTA 11207 B) BOGOTA 11205 C) BOGOTA 10728 \

\ Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d) \

\ 1. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador met with UN special advisor on \ Colombia James LeMoyné at the latter's request on October 28 \ and 30. LeMoyné said that the EU would release a new policy \ paper on Colombia in January 2005 which would lead to a more \ engaged approach. On demobilization, LeMoyné reported that \ GOC Peace Commissioner Restrepo had requested UN political \ support and technical assistance. LeMoyné told the \ Ambassador that the UN system was not working in Colombia and \ relations between the UN and GOC were strained. The SYG had \ proposed a high-level working group to discuss the situation \ which will meet later this month. Foreign Minister Barco \ will lead the Colombian side. Of particular concern was the \ operation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human \ Rights, whose relations with the GOC and G-24 had \ deteriorated sharply. LeMoyné reviewed the latest GOC \ proposal for Mexican facilitation of talks with the ELN. He \ also reported that the FARC was conducting a series of \ interviews with prominent leaders in Bogotá from business, \ politics and journalism to discuss their views on the current \ situation, prospects for the future and possible scenarios in \ which the FARC may consider taking political steps. LeMoyné \ said that he doubted the FARC would do anything to help \ President Uribe but might be willing to "play politics" to \ see what they could pocket. He speculated that the FARC \ might use the Catholic Church, the Swiss, and ex-presidents \ Samper and Pastrana to pressure President Uribe on the \ hostages and a humanitarian accord with terms closer to what \ FARC leaders want. END SUMMARY. \

\ 12. (C) On October 28 and 30, Ambassador met with UN special \ advisor on Colombia James LeMoyné during the latter's \ five-day visit to Bogotá. Issues covered included possible \ increased engagement by the EU, upcoming demobilizations of \ the AUC, the future of the UN presence, the status of ELN \ negotiations with the GOC, and recent FARC activity. \

\ ----- \ NEW EU POLICY PAPER ON COLOMBIA \ ----- \

\ 13. (C) LeMoyné said the EU position on the Colombian peace \ process was shifting. A new policy paper was circulating in \ Brussels which would be blessed by the Council in December. \ LeMoyné described it as advocating a more serious, engaged \ approach in Colombia. It will establish a framework to do \ more, he said. EU High Representative Javier Solana planned \ to come to Colombia in January to unveil it. (From readouts \ Embassy has received elsewhere, the EU paper may contain new \ positive statements but also establish new conditionalities \ on aid. That will impede assistance and widen the \ Colombia/EU gap.) \

\ ----- \ PEACE PROCESS \ ----- \

\ 14. (C) LeMoyné briefed Ambassador on his meeting with GOC \ High Commissioner for Peace Luis Carlos Restrepo on October \ 126. In the context of upcoming demobilizations of the AUC \ (refuels), Restrepo had requested that the UN provide: (1) \ public support for the OAS mission, including an appeal to \ donors for financial and technical support; (2) a strong \ declaration urging that those who disarm and the communities \ that receive them not be attacked; and (3) high-level \ training for GOC officials on demobilization, disarmament and \ reintegration (DDR). LeMoyné recommended that the UN, the \ International Committee for the Red Cross and the Catholic \ Church expand and deepen their DDR programs already underway \

in the affected areas. \

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REPAIRING GOC RELATIONS WITH THE UN \  
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15. (C) LeMoyné told Ambassador that his meetings with GOC \ officials during the UNGA "were not good." President Uribe \ remained unhappy with the UN. As a result, the SYG has \ proposed that the GOC and UN form a small, high-level working \ group to discuss the GOC's vision of the UN in Colombia and \ what the UN thought it ought to be doing. Barco will lead \ the GOC delegation to the first meeting tentatively planned \ for the end of November in New York. \

16. (C) LeMoyné conceded that the UN system was not working in \ Colombia, characterizing the various agencies as atomized, \ defending their own micro-programs. He noted that helpful \ but frustrated UNDP (and UN country team) director Alfredo \ Witschi would be retiring in the spring. This might be an \ opportunity to set in motion a new approach. LeMoyné also \ underscored that other countries -- the EU, the Nordics, \ Canada, Mexico, Brazil -- had to weigh in with the SYG and \ others in the system to energize UN attention to Colombia. \

17. (C) As LeMoyné saw it, the UN has three missions in \ Colombia: the Office of the High Commissioner for Human \ Rights (OHCHR), a revised humanitarian action plan, and good \ offices. He had already heard during this trip from FM Barco \ that GOC officials had lost confidence in the OHCHR presence \ and want it changed. The 27 recommendations were now viewed \ as draconian demands. In the view of GOC officials, whatever \ they told the OHCHR in the spirit of cooperation and \ consultation was used against them. LeMoyné forewarned that, \ if the OHCHR report due out soon was seen as unfair by the \ GOC, "we will have a very big mess on our hands." On the \ other hand, the UN presence and the human rights dimension in \ particular, were important to the Europeans and, with the EU \ likely to strengthen its involvement, the OHCHR would be even \ more essential. The high-level working group needed to \ tackle this problem first. \

18. (C) According to LeMoyné, the humanitarian agencies were \ also not working because of turf battles. The revised \ humanitarian action plan, to be launched in mid-November, had \ little chance of succeeding. There was not much scope for \ the good offices role either. There was little negotiating \ and unlikely to be any for a while. U/SYG Prendergast was \ advocating that the UN lower its profile in Colombia or close \ down the operation altogether. LeMoyné consulted with \ Restrepo on this point who urged that the UN good offices \ operation not depart. Restrepo had agreed that increasing \ the role was equally unwarranted because it would raise \ illusions which were not true. \

19. (C) Ambassador agreed that the humanitarian agencies were \ making a huge effort, but most of it was being frittered away \ by incompetence. He also expressed reservations about OHCHR \ representative Michael Fruhling. LeMoyné reiterated his view \ that whatever its problems, the OHCHR presence was essential \ and would become even more so when the "Law for Justice and \ Reparations" passed the Congress. Ambassador responded that \ the approach of both the OHCHR and leading NGOs on the law \ had been unhelpful. Demobilization was happening and the \ legal framework to deal with senior leaders and those who \ have committed gross violations of human rights or \ narco-trafficking remained unfinished. The result was that \ Restrepo's position at the negotiating table was undermined. \ His only response to requests from the AUC for legal \ guarantees was "no" because he has no legal structure to back \ him up. \

20. (C) LeMoyné said he was not prepared to write off the \ OHCHR but understood that the GOC wanted to. Barco was more \ than upset, convinced that the GOC was given no credit for \ making a sincere effort and that mending relations may not be \ worth the effort. Barco planned to travel to Geneva to meet \ High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour in \ mid-November to discuss the situation. LeMoyné wondered \ whether the mandate of the office was a problem -- could it \ monitor and offer assistance to the GOC at the same time. A \ debate was underway at OHCHR headquarters on the issue. The \ office had had three directors and all had ended up badly. \ Perhaps it was time to review the mandate. Ambassador \ disagreed, noting that the U.S. and others were able to do \ both. GOC officials could absorb and respond constructively \ to criticism if convinced that their interlocutors were \ working in their best interest. He noted that GOC officials \ remained fearful of the power and influence of the UN and the \ possibility that Colombia could land on the agenda of the \ Security Council. GOC officials did not draw a distinction \ between the Council and the UN writ large, and were convinced \ that the parts of the UN they interacted with were \ unsympathetic. \

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STATUS OF TALKS WITH THE ELN \  
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21. (C) LeMoyné said the ELN was fading, no threat to anyone, \ and under the protection of the FARC. The little brother-big \ brother dynamic remained in play: the smarter, more \ intellectual ELN, dependent on the thuggish and powerful \ FARC. The ELN hated the FARC, was frightened of it, and \ believed it was wrong. He was convinced that the FARC and \ ELN were meeting at high levels and maintained an agreement \ and alliance, and neither would negotiate seriously until \ things changed. The ELN was trying to tell the FARC that it \ wanted international breathing space and needed to take \ political steps, but the FARC would limit its \ maneuverability. Ambassador noted that the ELN remained \ politically important for the FARC, which would otherwise be \ isolated. The ELN might be disappearing as a meaningful \ piece on the chessboard, but the FARC would do everything to \ keep it alive. \

22. (C) LeMoyné heard that the Mexicans were putting \ considerable pressure on the GOC to move the negotiating \ process forward. The ELN wants to meet the Mexicans directly \ and Mexico wants the ELN to come to Mexico. Restrepo has \ resisted so far, insisting that the ELN respond to earlier \ GOC proposals. Nine years of ELN traveling abroad had \ yielded little. Restrepo wants the ELN to acknowledge that \ it has to deal with the GOC. His latest proposal is for the \

Mexicans to tell the ELN that Restrepo meet with (jailed) \ Francisco Galan as a first step. Then, the ELN would be \ permitted to go to Mexico for a one day meeting, and the next \ day, ELN would meet with Restrepo with Mexican facilitation. \ LeMoyne did not know how the ELN would respond. He assumed \ the Mexicans would wince but go along. \

¶13. (C) Ambassador responded that the GOC was afraid that \ Mexican facilitation would turn into a negotiating session \ with the GOC outside the room. Restrepo also knew, according \ to LeMoyne, that whatever travel rights he conceded to the \ ELN, the GOC would soon be pressed by the Swiss and others to \ give the FARC. \

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NEW FARC MOVES? \

¶14. (C) LeMoyne reported that the FARC had assembled a team \ of interviewers who were soliciting views in Bogota on the \ current situation, prospects for the future, and possible \ scenarios in which it could consider taking political steps. \ The FARC had reached out to a number of prominent individuals \ in business, politics and journalism. Some had agreed to \ talk; others refused. Most were surprised how easily the \ FARC was able to move around Bogota. Characterizing the FARC \ as a Stalinist, 1950s-style organization whose public \ statements still mattered, LeMoyne said that the most recent \ FARC communiqu "was not entirely bad" either. Finally, he \ said that FARC leader Manuel Marulanda Velez had cancer and \ was dying, and an effort was underway to raise the profile of \ Alfonso Cano. He expected that an interview with Cano would \ be published soon, projecting him to a wider audience. \

¶15. (C) LeMoyne doubted that anything constructive would come \ out of the FARC leadership "until President Uribe was \ re-elected." The FARC hated Uribe and would do nothing to \ help him politically or otherwise. They are convinced, \ according to LeMoyne, that he will weaken after re-election. \ Nonetheless, the FARC may want to play politics over the next \ few months and see what they can pocket. He speculated that \ they might use the Catholic Church or the Swiss to test the \ waters. Or, they might make peace overtures through \ ex-presidents Samper or Pastrana to pressure Uribe on the \ hostages and a humanitarian accord with terms closer to what \ FARC leaders want. Or, the FARC could accept a cease fire \ and play along to see what they could get out of it, with the \ hope of damaging Plan Patriota along the way. LeMoyne \ acknowledged that Plan Patriota has been a strategic hit on \ the FARC and the leadership would do anything to rid \ themselves of it. \

¶16. (C) According to LeMoyne, the Swiss channel (Jean-Pierre \ Gontard) remained open, and he and the Swiss government \ continued to press the FARC for a ceasefire. Their preferred \ scenario was to bring the FARC to Switzerland for a direct \ meeting with GOC officials under Swiss auspices. LeMoyne \ noted that Restrepo had told him that if the FARC agreed to a \ ceasefire, everything was possible. \

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COMMENT \

¶17. (C) In addition to an exchange of views, LeMoyne was \ looking to mend fences with the GOC and the G-24 to salvage \ the UN presence in Colombia. The latter is worth monitoring \ closely. LeMoyne's operation will be part of the GOC-UN \ evaluation. He said that he would resign if it became clear \ that he was impeding progress. The OHCHR operation has lost \ the GOC's confidence and exhausted its political capital with \ the G-24. A meeting between Foreign Minister Barco and UN \ High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour would be \ useful to clear the air. This is the OHCHR's largest \ operation outside of Geneva and should be its biggest \ success. The GOC needs it to succeed as well. As the GOC \ and the UN negotiate their future relationship, other \ countries active in Colombia beside the U.S. need to approach \ the SYG on the importance of supporting demobilization and \ other aspects of the peace process. In that context, a new \ EU policy as described by LeMoyne would be welcome. We \ understand that UK Foreign Secretary Straw has raised \ Colombia with the SYG on several occasions over the last few \ months. Countries like Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada, \ Brazil and others now need to do the same. \

WOOD \